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## **“Are We Not Men?” The Effect of Cloning on Traditional Theories of Humanity and Personhood**

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In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, few scientific endeavours have aroused as much controversy and debate as the advent of cloning. Successful animal cloning, culminating in the much-publicised birth of Dolly the sheep, has raised questions and anxieties about the possibility and implications of human cloning. It is becoming increasingly clear that the cloned human is, at some level, taking its place as a new “other” in society. However, such binary definition is, I will argue, problematic. In a world where a proliferation of “others” has been used throughout history to affirm a strong and stable sense of self, the cloned human is unique in its potential to destabilise the traditional Western human sense of self and personhood.

This paper will consider the creations of the scientists and protagonists of four gothic novels: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, H.G. Wells’s *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Richard Matheson’s *I Am Legend*, and Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. I use these novels as sites within which to examine both historical and modern day anxieties concerning identity and the definition of self and other. These Gothic novels dramatise both Victorian anxieties concerning identity and predict twenty-first-century fears about the advent of human cloning and the challenges that clones pose to traditional notions of self and other. The advent of human cloning has the potential to initiate an identity crisis, leading to a situation where, as Edmond Ortigues puts it, “my other is my fellow and my fellow is my other” (Lemaire 1977, 81).

The “other” is characterised as the antithesis of self, yet it is simultaneously inextricable from the definition of self. Theoretically, any being, culture or race can secure a positive image of its own identity or selfhood, by comparing itself to another being, culture or race. Hegel put forth the theory that “self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another” (Hegel 2001, 630). Therefore the other is an essential component in the appropriation and

maintenance of a stable and unified sense of self, as only “confrontation with the not-self” enables an entity “to identify what is self” (Hegel 2001, 626-7).

Characters such as Dracula, Frankenstein’s monster, and Ruth in *I Am Legend*, are portrayed in terms which could be defined as other in the aforementioned Gothic novels, threatening the safety, and more importantly, the identity of the human characters around them. In this way a correlation can be drawn between these fictional others and a cloned human being who, if brought into the world, could threaten society’s traditional theories about the self and reveal an intrinsic insecurity within traditional conceptions of human identity. In this paper I seek to show how the application of the ideas of the French theorists Jacques Lacan and Jacques Derrida, in conjunction with Freud’s idea of the uncanny, open up an interpretation of these fictional gothic characters which can provide a greater insight into the possible implications of cloning on the nature of personhood.

Before one can explore what it is to be other, or sub-human, in modern society, the question must be asked: what is it that defines the human? The modern classification of the human being can be traced back to Boethius and Thomas Aquinas, whose philosophical concept of the person, “*individual substantia rationalis naturae*”, is neatly summarised by Laura Palazzani:

... all human beings are persons, or moral subjects (worthy of being respected), and subjects of law (worthy of safeguarding, in the strong sense, or having the right to life).

(Palazzani 1998, 52).

This definition, unconditionally advocating the right to life for all humans, was undercut by Darwin’s theory of natural selection, which seriously challenged earlier beliefs in what it was to be human. The world and its inhabitants could no longer be defined simply as God’s creations. Natural selection destabilised the traditional integrity of the species, and remade it according to the

immediate, situational logic of adaptation to the environment (Dryden 2003, 41). It was not only religious faith that was challenged, but the central perception of the physicality of humanity.

Fears concerning the evolving classification of humanity and the self manifest themselves frequently in gothic literature. For example, Chris Baldick asserts that *The Island of Doctor Moreau* is a “fable which directs its painful probings at the contemporary miscreation of the world that we call human” (Baldick 1987, 156). At the end of the novel, Wells’s protagonist Prendick comments that all of the men and women about him “are indeed men and women, men and women forever” (Wells 2005, 130). This comment rings of desperation, as Prendick attempts to convince himself that humanity is unchanged and unchanging. It is indicative of a preoccupation and anxiety with the changing classification of identity and humanity in the nineteenth century. The consistent representation of the subhuman and the humanoid monster in gothic literature reflects societal fears and the realisation that the self was being fundamentally challenged, not just by a new other, but by an other who demonstrated an unsettling correlation with the self.

For instance, the monstrous Count Dracula most frequently appears in the form of a human being. Jonathan Harker’s first description of Dracula as “a tall old man, clean-shaven save for a long moustache,” represents Dracula as a non-threatening human (Stoker 1994, 47). These vestiges of humanity are crucial: in order to rid themselves of the other, Van Helsing and the other human characters in *Dracula* must kill a being that is, in many ways, indistinguishable from themselves. As Jonathan Harker remarks, “What manner of man is this, or what manner of creature is it in the semblance of man?” (Stoker 1994, 47). When the human characters challenge Dracula, they challenge not only the other, but also the self. Dracula hides his otherness by conforming outwardly to traditional notions of humanity and a Victorian aristocratic civility. This in turn forces the human characters to question the validity and stability of received, traditional markers of human selfhood. Dracula irreparably changes the human form and forges an identity whose correlation to the self is so strong that it can no longer be defined as other, but rather as pseudo-self. This pseudo-self strains

the traditional binary opposition between self and other, allowing the other to simulate characteristics of the self in order to gain acceptance or assimilation into traditional human society.

The emergence of the pseudo-self in *Dracula*, and its ability to threaten the boundaries between self and other, can be strongly linked to Victorian English societal fears that the Irish could in some way be subsumed into British society and threaten the traditional notion of what it was to be British. As John Paul Riquelme suggests, “the vampire was used in the nineteenth century to signify national antagonism between the British and the Irish” (Riquelme 2002, 371). These racial undertones are an important aspect of Stoker’s work, informed by his own ambiguous position as an Anglo-Irish writer. Stoker was born into the Anglo-Irish Protestant ruling class in Ireland; his cultural identity was thus characterised by ambiguity. In Ireland, his Protestant Anglo-Irish heritage demarcated him from the Catholic Irish middle and working classes, thus portraying him as a cultural “other” within his own country. Simultaneously, as an Irishman, he was also perceived by the English to be other and was thus “encumbered by his brogue and Irishness even as he made his way up the social ladder” in London (Gibbons 2004, 78). As Joseph Valente points out, Stoker had an “interlineal identity,” at home neither “in the cultural centre nor the cultural margins” (Valente 2002, 9).

Stoker’s experience as an Anglo-Irish writer can be connected to the wider British representation of the Irish as “other” in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. L.P. Curtis outlines in his book *Anglo-Saxons and Celts* “a pattern of thinking” in Victorian England which he has termed “Anglo-Saxonism” (Curtis 1968, 6). In order to maintain a stable and unified identity, the English constructed a binary opposition between Anglo-Saxons and Irish Celts, portraying the Irish as “childish, emotionally unstable, ignorant, indolent, superstitious, primitive or semi-civilized, dirty, vengeful and violent” (Curtis 1968, 53). The Englishman, by comparison to the primitive “Paddy,” defined himself as “mature”:

he boasted self-control; he was energetic not lazy, rational not superstitious, civilized not primitive, clean not dirty, ready to forgive [ . . . ] and prepared to live under the rule of law. (Curtis 1968, 53).

This dichotomy arose chiefly from a need by the British to create a primitive other in order to justify a proclaimed superiority and, more importantly, to maintain a stable self-image and identity. In fact, this exaggerated caricature of the Irish was to become an integral part of the Victorian English sense of identity. As Curtis states, the “two images of the self and the Celt were as mutually necessary in Anglo-Saxonist minds as the two sides of a coin: the one could not be relinquished without the other” (Curtis 1968, 119). Victorian English identity as here characterised was based on an illusory concept, a created category for the “so called Irish national character” which had “relatively little to do with the social, political, economic and psychological realities of millions of Irishmen, women and children” (Curtis 1968, 14). The boundaries between the self and other, presented as absolute, are shown to be little more than a cultural construct, arising from a need to bolster a strong sense of British identity.

Dracula’s position as pseudo-self in Stoker’s novel could be viewed as indirectly challenging this historical construct of English self and Celtic other. His ability to blend into Victorian English society belies the notion of the easily identifiable other. Carol Senf puts forward this argument in “Dracula: The Unseen Face in the Mirror.” She argues that Stoker “creates unreliable narrators to tell a tale, not of the overcoming of Evil by Good”, of other by self, but instead to illustrate “the similarities between the two” (Senf 1979, 10). However these fears concerning the weakening of boundaries between self and other are not confined to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Identity remained a constant preoccupation throughout the twentieth century, and the received conception of the unified, stable self was continually challenged. Jacques Derrida emphasised “the instability of the notion of ‘identity,’” stating at a roundtable discussion in

October 1994 that “no so-called identity is, or should take itself to be, ‘homogenous’ or ‘self-identical’” (Caputo 2004, 113). In the twenty-first century, the advent of cloning has continued to undercut traditional definitions of humanity and the self. Once again, a scientific discourse has disrupted the traditional Western view of what it is to be human, challenging people to accept, if only in a theoretical sense, artificially created beings and clones as humans. In some respects, this acceptance seems natural. However, in other respects, clones and other artificially created beings challenge traditional precepts of humanity, making their subsequent acceptance as humans all the more problematic.

What is it about the concept of cloning that unsettles people? The clone is the unfamiliar, the strange, and the human anxiety about the success of cloning would seem to confirm Freud’s assertion that the disturbance involved in “themes of uncanniness” or unfamiliarity is related to “the phenomenon of the ‘double’” (Freud 2001, 940). The double, the clone, can, like Dracula, excite fear and trepidation in society because it is the unknowable and unfamiliar other, yet in all verifiable ways a simulacrum of the self. Freud furthers his point by stating that the subject (in this case the traditionally-born human) “identifies himself with someone else” (the clone), “so that he is in doubt as to which his self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for his own” (Freud 2001, 940). From this perspective, the human clone’s greatest threat to traditional theories of self is not in its difference from humanity, but rather in its inherent similarity.

Should a clone come into being, he or she would closely resemble, or look exactly like, another human being. In a very real sense, the clone appears as the pseudo-self, an “other” whose inherent correlation to the self is so strong that the boundaries between self and other can no longer be delineated. As Gilman concludes, despite demarking ourselves from the other, in truth “we know we are not different” (Ferguson 1999, 240). This absence of originality makes the maintenance of a sense of self highly problematic. Marciano Vidal, in *The Ethics of Genetic Engineering*, gets to the point in her statement that “the most important consideration of all is that human beings have their

own identity; cloning impacts directly on this basic requirement for being a person" (Vidal 1998, 109). Clones literally replicate another person, and so cannot be said to possess an essential identity of their own. Furthermore, the ability to create multiple clones of the same human being represents a dilution and disintegration of a stable sense of an integral, original self. Traditional notions of the uniqueness of the human being would be directly challenged by the emergence of these pseudo-selves. As Freud asserts: "there is a doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self" (Freud 2001, 940). Freud's ideas invite comparison with the human clone. Humans would be literally challenged to look themselves in the eye and ask the question: if you are me, then who am I?

This loss of identity and fracturing of the self can be linked to Lacan's theories in "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience." The cloning process could strip the original human of any stable sense of self, or "gestalt," which, for Lacan, "symbolises the mental permanence of the I," a complete exterior image which provides humans with the illusion of a totality of self (Lacan 2001, 1286). This self image is in many ways a fiction, as the subject attempts to achieve "a totality and autonomy it can never attain" (Lacan 2001, 1281). The emergence of a cloned human being could be argued to expose the illusoriness of this totality. While identity may not be solely based on a person's genes, the loss of a unique genetic identity cannot be dismissed as insignificant. The ability to create numerous clones of the same human being at any time may create an illusion that the self can live on indefinitely. This can be linked to Otto Rank's treatment of the double as outlined in Freud's "The Uncanny." Rank contends that "the 'double' was originally an insurance against the destruction of the ego" (Freud 2001, 940); in other words, an attempt, if only theoretical, to cheat the power of death. Yet if, conceptually, cloning seems to offer humans this ability to cheat death, it could equally be said that the emergence of the pseudo-self spells death for the original self.

The dilution of identity through cloning is hauntingly outlined by Ian Wilmut, Keith Campbell and Colin Tudge in *The Second Creation*. Soon after Wilmut and Campbell publicised



their successful cloning of Dolly the sheep, they were flooded with calls from bereaved families, asking if they could clone their lost loved ones (Wilmut et al. 2000, 16). The idea that a pseudo-self could in some way revive humans who have passed away is based on a misunderstanding of the science of cloning (Wilmut et al. 2000, 16), and it could in fact be said that cloning would strip the deceased human of their last vestiges of identity. The pseudo-self's outward correlation with the original human could mask its true otherness, particularly from grief stricken loved ones. The illusoriness of self-continuation through cloning is exemplified by the character of Virginia in *I Am Legend*. Virginia dies of a mystery illness, yet, after her burial, she returns to Neville. The undead Virginia appears not as an unidentifiable other, but as a shadow of the self, a pseudo-self whose outward correlation to Neville's wife compels him to accept her and attempt to reintegrate her into society. Despite the fact that she looked, as he described it, like "an outline," Neville tries "to keep her" with him (Matheson 2007, 139). However, despite his attempts to continue his relationship with his lost wife, Neville is later forced to admit that "she wasn't the same any more" (Matheson 2007, 139). The transition is impossible. Indeed, Virginia's original identity becomes irrevocably subsumed by that of the pseudo-self. Instead of remembering his wife as she was, Neville is consumed by images of a walking corpse, images that he can't "forget—or adjust or—ever get away from" (Matheson 2007, 139). Matheson is strikingly prescient in his description of the disruption that a pseudo-self could cause to traditional assumptions about humanity and the self.

Of course, these themes were adumbrated by Shelley in *Frankenstein*, where the monster, though a very unique-looking individual, has no real identity of his own. He has no name, a factor which may be considered a fundamental marker of one's identity, and he has no real sense of self, because of the method of his creation. Constituted from the body parts of many human beings, he cannot attain an autonomous existence. However, this method of creation affects not only the identity of the monster, but also the identities of the deceased human beings whom Frankenstein uses to create his monster. When discussing the monster's creation, Frankenstein states that the

“dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished” many of his “materials” (Shelley 1986, 315). The fact that human beings can be seen as mere “materials” is indicative of the profound effect that his creation of a pseudo-self has had upon Frankenstein’s conception of the identities of the original selves. These original human beings lose their independent identity through the monster’s creation, and become quite literally subsumed into the pseudo-self. By the end of the creation process the selves have been stripped of their identity and power. In fact it is only through an identity void that the monster can emerge.

This process can be better understood with reference to Lacan’s definition of “objet petit a”. Objet petit a can be understood as “an object that causes desire, an object which we seek but which we never attain” (Atkinson 2002, 125). It is a fantasy or imaginary object, something which has no existence “in reality” but which nevertheless structures desire. Through the creation of the pseudo-self, the identity of the traditionally born human has lost direct connection with the body. Therefore the human body, and, by extension, human identity itself has become the “objet petit a” (Lacan 2001, 1283). Frankenstein’s monster clearly differs from a clone as he is created from the organic material of multiple people. Nevertheless, this example can help us to explore anxieties concerning human cloning. Human identity and power is shown to be based upon an “objet petit a,” something which was never there, something unreal. If the basis of human power and identity is not itself real, it must be assumed that human autonomy and identity is an unstable construction. The loss of identity thus appears an inevitable consequence of the already unstable nature of human identity.

The anxiety surrounding the emergence of the pseudo-self can be closely linked to the fear that the clone or created human could infiltrate modern society. This fear is strongly portrayed in *Frankenstein*, but it can be seen even more clearly in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*. Prendick’s comment when he returns to London, that “the animal was surging up through” the people around him (Wells 2005, 130), “underlines the fact that Moreau’s Beast People are not so far removed from the citizens of the modern metropolis” (Dryden 2003, 17). Prendick’s fear and suspicion of the

people around him indicates a blurring and perhaps even the possible collapse of the boundaries between self and other.

Should cloned human beings be indistinguishable from traditionally born humans, then the boundary between the self and other would be irrevocably changed. The figure of Dracula again emphasises this point. He may be peculiar looking, yet it is clear that he is human in appearance. He can blend into a crowd, as when Mina and Jonathan Harker encounter him in London: “when the carriage moved up Piccadilly he followed in the same direction, and hailed a hansom” (Stoker 1994, 208). Lucy Westenra similarly loses her humanity when she becomes a vampire while remaining, particularly when sleeping, indistinguishable from her human self, making it more difficult for Van Helsing to “kill her in her sleep” (Stoker 1994, 241). These examples point to a weakening of the boundaries between human and other. Once again, the other has infiltrated the self and become the indistinguishable pseudo-self.

From an Irish perspective, as has been suggested, this fear of infiltration can be linked to Victorian English fears that the colonised Irish would infiltrate and infect English society. The Irish were figured as distinctly other in British discourse, a historical construct based on nationality as well as racial and often religious prejudice. As Curtis states, the Victorian English

mixed small fragments of reality with large amounts of what they wanted to believe about the indigenous peoples in order to arrive at a foregone conclusion based on their particular needs at the time. (Curtis 1968, 34).

However, the close geographical and historical links between England and Ireland made this construction of the Irish as other quite unstable. The increasing numbers of Irish immigrants arriving in England was bringing the English into direct contact with the Irish, often exposing the illusory nature of the differences between the English self and the Irish other. For example, in an

appendix to *The Lion and the Fox*, Wyndham Lewis described the Irish people that he saw during what he termed “the martyrdom of the Lord Mayor of Cork,” Terence McSwiney, who died while on hunger strike:

I had several opportunities of seeing considerable numbers of Irish people demonstrating among the London crowds. I was never able to distinguish which were Irish and which were English, however. They looked to me exactly the same [. . .] my eyes refused to effect the necessary separation that the principle of “Celtism” demanded, into chalk and cheese. I should have supposed that they were a lot of romantic English-people pretending to be Irish people. (Lewis 1927, 322).

Lewis demonstrates the unstable nature of the othering of the Irish in British discourse. When faced with the Irish, they appeared not as the distinguishable other, but rather as indistinguishable from the English themselves.

This unstable representation of the Irish as other in British discourse led, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, to a fear of the infiltration of the Irish into British society. This fear centred around the Irish immigrant’s propensity to challenge the English sense of identity and selfhood and expose the illusory nature of the boundaries between self (the English) and other (the Irish). In fact, throughout the nineteenth century, various political crises concerning Anglo-Celtic relations affected the English political sphere. These crises threatened the English status quo, and by extension, English national identity, and as a result triggered an intensification of the portrayal of the Irish as other by the English in order to protect the identity of the British Empire from the outside threat. Curtis outlines this point in *Anglo-Saxons and Celts*, stating that the

sense of superiority on the part of the English gradually increased in the course of the nineteenth century as the Catholic emancipation crisis excited militant Protestantism, as O’Connell’s repeal agitation alarmed defenders of the *status quo*, and as a more extreme form of Irish nationalism in the late 1870s and 1880s forced Liberals and Conservatives alike to fear the security of the Act of Union and the integrity of the empire. (Curtis 1968, 25).

In this context, *Dracula* can be viewed, as the product of an Anglo-Irish writer, as a depiction of the British fear of infiltration by the white colonised Irish who would “destabilise the traditional notion of British identity and self” (Arata 2000, 161). *Dracula* dramatises nineteenth-century fears concerning self and other, providing an insight into the Victorian English psyche of the time. Similarly, the character of Dracula forces all of the human characters in the novel to question their preconceived beliefs concerning the constitution of the self and the human. By coming to England and infiltrating British society, he threatens the sense of safety and security within one’s own country, and challenges British superiority on their own soil. The characters’ unified attack against “a threatening outsider who is not English” is further evidence of their need to restore their sense of superiority and exterminate any threat to their concept of identity (Riquelme 2002, 371). The physical threat imposed by Dracula can therefore be likened to the ideological threat imposed by the Irish in the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries.

While the Irish were one of many colonial, ethnic and cultural “others” who inspired fear in the English psyche and discourse in the Victorian era, in modern society, the clone has emerged to inspire trepidation, not simply as a new other, but rather as pseudo-self. Like the Irish in Victorian England, the clone can be imbued with the same power to disrupt the modern day constructed concept of identity and selfhood. For the definition of the self in the twenty-first century is no less a construction than that of Victorian Britain, and the advent of cloning has the potential to expose the

true artificiality of human identity and sense of self. A related fear is explored in *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, where the Beast People attempt to organise their own society with rules which they feel define them as men:

Not to go on all-Fours; *that* is the Law. Are we not Men?

Not to suck up Drink; *that* is the Law. Are we not Men?

Not to eat Flesh or Fish; *that* is the Law. Are we not Men? (Wells 2005, 59).

The repeated question posed by the Beast People highlights the difficulty in separating the self from the pseudo-self, the human from the created being. The Beast People assert that their outward conformity to what they see as human attributes endows them with humanity. However, despite this external or performative humanity, Moreau is quick to assert that the Beast People remain an identifiable other: their society is, as he deems it, “a mockery of a rational life” (Wells 2005, 79). Moreau’s claim that the human claim to originality and autonomy of identity is not challenged by the Beast People remains overly simplistic. For a time the animal-men adhere to societal laws and develop a humanised society. They have a “Law”, they “build themselves their dens, gather fruit and pull herbs—marry even” (Wells 2005, 79), and their adherence to such societal norms blurs the distinction between self and other. They expose the barriers between self and pseudo-self as a mere construction which can be challenged, and in many ways broken down, by the new created being. Indeed, upon meeting Prendick and Montgomery in the jungle, two of the animal men, Satyr and Ape Man, salute Montgomery: “‘Hail,’ said they, ‘to the Other with the whip’” (Wells 2005, 86). The fact that the animal men view the human Montgomery as the “Other,” is indicative of the extent to which the boundaries between self and other have been weakened. Wells ultimately falls back on the conservative belief in a natural order, whereupon the animal-men revert back to their distinctly other form. However, the question has already been posed: is this “natural order” simply a man-

made construction, built to maintain the status quo and allow the self to maintain a stable sense of identity unchallenged by the pseudo-self?

Matheson's conclusion in *I Am Legend* explores these constructed barriers between self and pseudo-self even more extensively. In a very Derridean decentring, the conclusion of *I Am Legend* sees the sub-human, the new subaltern, overthrow traditional society in order to create their own new world order. Robert Neville, the last surviving human, understands this in his dying moments: "suddenly he thought, I'm the abnormal one now. Normalcy was a majority concept, the standard of many and not the standard of just one man" (Matheson 2007, 160). In this new world the human is the subaltern and the sub-human, the created being, takes power. The self has been colonised by the other, and as a result the identity of the self and its stable and dominant position in the world has been fundamentally altered. Crucially, *I Am Legend* does not define this new society as inherently evil. As Ruth puts it, "New societies are always primitive. [. . .] In a way we are like a revolutionary group—repossessing society by violence" (Matheson 2007, 157).

*I Am Legend* takes the modern-day fears of the sub-human and places them in an entirely new context. The new subaltern group are given a rationale, perhaps justifying the violence it commits, and a viable future existence is proposed. Should cloned humans come to outnumber naturally born humans in the future, it might well affect the balance of power. The fear of this possibility, evoked in *I Am Legend*, can be linked to Derrida's idea of "hospitality" as outlined in *Deconstruction in a Nutshell*. J.D. Caputo summarises:

"Hospitality," the welcome extended to the guest, is a function of the power of the host to remain master of the premises. A "host" is someone who takes on or receives strangers, who gives to the stranger, even while remaining in control. (Caputo 2004, 110).

*I am Legend* is indicative of what could happen should the “host” lose control. The momentum of scientific progress welcomes cloned humans; we invite them to cross our threshold; but the question remains, can the Western notion of autonomous, original identity, withstand the challenge to its authenticity presented by the advent of human cloning?

A challenge by a human clone to previously held beliefs concerning Western identity could force a re-evaluation of modern society’s current definition and delineation of self and other. This re-evaluation could see the clone, once defined as the other, seeking recognition and an autonomous identity in modern society. In this instance traditionally-born human beings could find their previously fixed notions of identity and selfhood threatened by the emergence of a new pseudo-self. Robert Neville articulates this possibility in *I Am Legend* when he refers to the infected as “the new people of the earth” (Matheson 2007, 161). Neville, being the only one of his kind to survive, becomes an “anathema and black terror to be destroyed” (Matheson 2007, 161). The dominant centre has quite literally become the other.

In the twenty-first century, one of the core elements through which humans define their sense of self, their identity, and their place in society is through their community. David Braine articulates that human beings have “roots in a community; proximately, the community of human beings, and, underlying this, the community constituted as a whole” (Braine 1988, 60). A significant challenge posed by cloning is its potential to destabilise our community roots. Derrida makes the point that “if a community is too welcoming, it loses its identity” (Caputo 2004, 113). In welcoming the clone, humans may have to strike a balance between welcoming the other and protecting the identity of the self. If humans can be cloned, how will society and the community be constituted? How can the human be defined and how will traditional theories of self and other be applied? In order to look to the future, humans will have to come to terms with the ramifications of these questions.



I have attempted to outline some of the primary anxieties concerning the advocacy of cloning, with particular emphasis upon its possible effects on the definition of the self and other. Experimentation with human cloning has the potential to shatter traditional boundaries between self and other and fundamentally alter the very “nature of humanity” (Wilmut et al. 2000, 313). Western society, as exemplified by the Victorian English, have historically constructed a plethora of others in order to bolster a strong and unified sense of self, and the advent of human cloning, even if only in theory, has emphasised the falsity of these constructions and shown, as Luke Gibbons states, that what “starts out being strange and remote [. . .] ends up as being all too familiar” (Gibbons 2004, 87).

Human cloning exposes the fact that constructions of self and other, are, in many respects, based on a claim of artificiality. Self and other are shown to be, not binary opposites, but indistinguishable. Human cloning would initiate a process whereby the self would be solely responsible for fundamentally altering its own nature. Theoretical and manmade constructions of self and other, long debated and discussed, would be placed upon a new physical stage. Humans would thus “shape themselves through their autonomous choices” and face an identity crisis, and indeed a pseudo-self, of their own making (Lacan 2001, 1289). This pseudo-self has the potential to destabilize traditional societal power structures and spark a new debate of the very definition of humanity. Perhaps we should look to the words of Derrida:

The question of opening oneself to difference, to the other, will *always* come back to the gift, to trumping greed with generosity, to breaking the self-gathering circle of the same with the affirmation of the other. (Caputo 2004, 116).

The question remains: would human societies be willing to affirm and accept the human clone without losing sight of our own community and identity? Whatever the answer to that question, it is

clear that the emergence of the human clone would constitute one of the greatest challenges to identity in human history.

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